

ECHOES OF THE RAIL.

THE last general assembly of Alabama passed an act which makes train robbery in that state punishable by death.

An English inventor has invented an automatic air brake in which the weight of the train supplies the power to set the brakes.

THE railroad and warehouse commission of Illinois has given an opinion that one road cannot be made to furnish terminal facilities for another.

MR. LESLIE, the inventor of the rotary snowplow, states that one of these machines is now being built in Copenhagen to be sent to Russia. The Union Pacific now has six of them.

It is estimated that the Lackawanna stores more ice for summer use than any other road in the country. The number of tons harvested by the company is said to be nearly 2,000,000.

THE Bullock bill fixing street car fares in New Jersey at three cents between the hours of five and seven o'clock in the morning and evening was disposed of by an adverse committee report.

THE Southern Railway company is said to have revoked the order for building new shops at Atlanta, Ga., owing to a number of suits for damages instituted by property owners in the vicinity of the shops.

If the estimate is correct that the accumulated snow in Chicago weighed 350,000,000 tons, it may be of interest to know it would have taken the twenty-two Chicago roads thirty-four years to carry it away, if they took as many tons as they ordinarily do of all kinds of freight.

ABSURD STAGE DEATHS.

Nature Outrageously Violated Instead of Being Shown a Mirror.

A French dramatic critic, with some show of medical knowledge, represents that nearly all actors and actresses outrageously violate nature in their imitations of death, says the Baltimore Gazette. He cites, in corroboration of his charge, the customary theatrical death of Camille, in the younger Dumas' favorite emotional play of that title. According to the author, his heroine is affected with pulmonary consumption, and an incidental attack of hemorrhage of the lungs extinguishes her life. There is absolutely nothing dramatic to be made out of this mode of dying, if fidelity to fact be obeyed. The gushing of a stream of blood from the mouth would be realistic, but the imitation of such a phenomenon is never made by actors, male or female, nor would any discreet manager tolerate such a piece of stage business. Again, the overwhelming suffocation which produces the rapid death in Camille's case is never accompanied by convulsions, such as her dying representatives on the stage almost always assume. In natural death from this

cause the sufferer simply collapses from failure of the vital powers.

Theatrical poisoning scenes are also usually untrue to nature. It is popularly believed that when a fatal dose of laudanum or morphine is swallowed the victim immediately sinks into a deathlike sleep, as is commonly seen on the stage, whereas the first effect of this poison taken in like quantity is invariably to excite and enliven. Nor is the mode of dying after the hackneyed cardiac stage stab in conformity with the laws of nature. The actor simply falls at full length, or in a heap, whereas the everyday member of society gives a spring when the heart is struck before entering eternity by this unhappy gate. Even the modern Othello has not inherited enough of Shakespeare's wonderful fidelity to truth to die naturally after a stab through the heart.

A Crew of Deaf Mutes.

The schooner Mary and Belle is probably the only vessel in the world that is manned by a crew that is deaf and dumb. The schooner is not a large vessel by any means, being about seventy feet long, but she is a neat-looking craft and her docks, spars and rigging look in much better condition than those of many other vessels whose crews can speak the language to the queen's taste. The captain of this craft, George Bennett, is a most intelligent-looking man, apparently fifty years old. He is alive to all that is going on around him and seems to enjoy his silent and speechless life. The "crew," Charlie Malone, is also deaf and dumb. These two deaf and dumb men manage the stanch schooner Mary and Belle admirably. They are always on the lookout and sleep with one eye open, as good sailors always should. When they are caught in heavy squalls the captain cannot shriek out his commands but simply attracts his man's attention by a whistle and then tells him what he wants by signs, while he sticks to the wheel.

PROMINENT ENGLISHMEN.

HON. ALAN JOHNSTONE, son of Lord Derwent and lately second secretary of the British embassy at Washington, has just been appointed secretary of the legation to Copenhagen.

MR. PATRICK BOYLE SMOLLET, the last of the Smollets of Bonhill and a direct descendant of the author of "Peregrine Pickle" and "Roderick Random," died recently, aged 92. He had represented Dumbartonshire and Cambridge in parliament.

DR. H. P. JOHNSON, the new bishop suffragan of Colchester, is an Eton, Trinity and Cambridge man, and when

ARE BIRDS GUIDED BY STARS?

An Attempt to Solve the Great Mystery of Bird Migration.

In an article on "Birds of Passage" the Chautauquan says if one desires an explanation for the great mystery of bird migration, there being nothing else that will answer, he will have to accept the theory of hereditary knowledge, a knowledge of the unfailing stars. The Great Bear and Orion appeared at the same time in our region, even when the divisions of land and water were very different than they are to-day. That the stars are the guides for birds agrees with the fact that they fly at remarkable heights, often above the clouds, and that wanderers lose their way when they stray into clouds and mists.

On starlight nights straggling birds are seldom noticed. When the sky is overcast, when the night is dark, but especially when a fine rain is falling, multitudes of traveling birds are heard. Then they call often, doubtless for the purpose of keeping near each other; and often great numbers of them bound against the windows of light-houses. Thus Gatke has observed that on October 28, 1882, from ten o'clock at night till the next morning golden-crested wrens bumped like snowflakes against the lighthouse of Heligoland, and that on the following day golden-crested wrens sat on every square foot of Heligoland.

Toward the end of the summer, along into the fall, it was not a rare occurrence on dark nights to see, through the light of street lamps, birds flying over inland cities. The experienced observer recognizes by its call the curlew and the strand-snipe, sea-swallow and seagull, occasionally hears even the flap of their wings. But no bird is visible in the darkness. On dark nights no stars appear; then it is that the straying bird loses his way. The stars are the most plausible guides to birds in their migrations. But only the future can tell us whether they really serve in that capacity.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

It Pays to Put Things on the Market in Prime Condition.

The farmer who is contented with average crops sold in the average condition must expect only average prices. He who produces anything and puts it on the market in prime condition is the one who is going to make sales first and get top prices. The average man comes along later. No matter what you have to sell, put it in the best possible condition for market and see to it that you can adopt the same motto that we once saw in a barrel of apples in the east. When the head was taken out of that barrel there was exposed a printed slip which said: "This package was produced and packed by John Smith, who guarantees that when you see the top you see the whole." The commission man told us that he never had any trouble with anything that man sent in, for his reputation had been made. He not only packed his fruit and vegetables in the best manner, but sorted the sizes, and when the package was opened the buyer knew just what to expect from top to bottom. We know a farmer who takes his grain to market and dumps it wherever the buyer tells him to, and is then asked how many bushels he had. His grain is never looked at nor weighed by the man who has weighed it for years; if it is not in good condition he insists on inspection, but if he knows it is all right he unloads and gets his pay. A reputation of that kind is worth more than a good farm, for it brings a greater return. Honesty is not only the best policy, but it is absolutely necessary to final success. Carelessness is the costliest habit a farmer can fall into, and trickery, while it may seem to succeed for a time, must cost more than it comes to in the end.—Connecticut Farmer.

LACK OF ORDER.

The Chinese Deficient in Military System and Discipline.

The Chinese are an untidy race, whose cities in their native country are frightfully unclean, and whose special quarters in our cities are apt to afford anxiety to boards of health. The Japanese, on the contrary, are extremely cleanly, orderly and neat; and one of the stories told of Chinese soldiers in the present war tends to show that this difference has played no small part in determining victory or defeat.

The Japanese are armed with modern weapons, of which they take excellent care, and which they handle with skill and efficiency. A lady writing from China says that the Chinese troops are provided with a curious variety of European arms, obsolete, ancient and new; and that cartridges for perhaps twenty different makes are all served out together.

In Manchuria she actually saw cartridges piled carelessly on the ground, "not in boxes, but lying in great heaps like potatoes—long and short, fat and thin, all mixed together, and soldiers sitting them to their guns, trying them, and throwing away those which were too large or too small."

No wonder the Chinamen do not stand before the Japanese. As soon as the cartridges each man happens to carry are exhausted he can only depend on one chance in twenty of getting any more that he can use. Hesitation waits that chance; he runs, and throws his useless rifle promptly away that he may run the faster.—London Spectator.

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